

**European Perspectives on Security – Lessons of the Conflicts
in the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa**

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Framing the Question

Answering the question which political and strategic lessons the Europeans learnt from their involvement in conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East and in Africa and how these are shaping their expectation of future developments in their and global security is not a straightforward task. The operations concerned took place in a variety of different frameworks, national, under NATO, more recently, the European Union (EU) or as part of a ‘coalition of the willing’ and the United Nations (UN). In each context, both the contributing nations as well as the umbrella organisation learnt lessons and one could argue that each case yielded specific lessons that are not always transferable to other conflicts or operations. In many cases the lessons are still being learnt, not least because the peace support operations and reconstruction are still ongoing.

Yet, these are not the only problems in answering the question. Lessons learnt in past operations are not confined to the operational engagements themselves. Apart from affecting plans for developing national capabilities, there was also reflection on the relationship between allies within or apart from the EU and NATO, at the level of both regional organisations and on the relationship between individual member states and the two organisations with the UN. It is, however, safe to say that perhaps the most important lesson the Europeans learnt from their operations is, that military intervention is usually

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followed by a sustained period of political, economic and social instability whose resolution demands a highly complex mix of military, diplomatic, humanitarian and economic approaches and substantial long-term commitment. This is the case for individual European states as well as the EU and NATO. Yet, this essay focuses on developments at EU level for three reasons:

One, the EU has hit a very steep learning curve over the past decade, which is currently generating a significant dynamic. In December 2003 the Council published the EU's first strategy paper. It can be seen as an interim consolidation of a process that had begun in the wake of the EU's critical self-reflection on its performance over the break-up of Yugoslavia, a response to the lack of consensus within the EU and transatlantic relations over Iraq and a framework for future approaches to regional and global security. Two, without significant input from member states these developments would not have been possible and many of the lessons learnt from 'national initiatives' are relevant to the EU's thinking about its future security. Hence, some national lessons will be examined, but as far as possible through the prism of the EU. This allows a assessing some general principles of 'European' security policies with due regard to the potential impact of national experiences or preferences and the role of the EU and NATO (and the relationship between them) in the implementation of these principles.

Three, the EU is very much aware of the problems it is and will be encountering in implementing the security strategy it has only just devised. However, not only does the nature of the main security challenges require international co-operation or co-ordination, at a purely European level no state can attempt to meet them with national resources alone. It is this realisation of the need to work together - in the EU, NATO and with the US and other allies - which has provided the impetus for the quite dynamic developments in the past decade. The future of EU security co-operation is somewhat uncertain, as enlargement is very likely to change the internal dynamics of negotiating agreement on policies but, although this may slow developments down, ultimately there is a strong rationale for working towards further cohesion - the EU is contributing to the stability of the continent through increasing its membership and preparing further enlargement. As the experience in the Balkans has shown, the latter cannot always only be accomplished through negotiation, but has involved, and will do so in the foreseeable future, a strong

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commitment to providing security and rebuilding societies that are officially, though not always factually, in a post-conflict phase. For this reason alone, the EU has a stronger incentive than ever to create the capacity to perform political and military tasks, which it did not have to conduct during the Cold War.

Towards a Common Security Strategy

The conflicts in the Balkans had a significant impact on the EU. It was the critical reflection on their performance during the break-up of Yugoslavia that triggered the St Malo process in 1998, when the UK and France took the lead in promoting a viable Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including the provision of military capabilities, which had led a rather dormant life since its inception with the Maastricht Treaty. The serious inner-European and transatlantic rift over the war on Iraq gave the EU's approach to security another jolt. At the Thessaloniki European Council in June 2003 the EU's Special Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana, proposed strategy papers on security and WMD proliferation respectively.¹ Both documents were adopted officially as 'A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy' and 'Fight Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction – EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction' in December 2003.² The EU's new security strategy has three central characteristics, which also form the background to the Non-Proliferation Strategy as it is essentially an elaboration of one aspect of the former:

One, the security strategy conceptualises future security challenges as negative effects of globalisation and is deeply wedded to the concepts of 'human security' and 'global common goods', which must be protected or enhanced through a mix of political, economic and, if necessary, military means (in line with the Petersberg Tasks). The latter are seen as important, but as a last resort rather than a primary tool in protecting security now or in future. Two, unsurprisingly since the EU has itself grown from multilateral co-

¹ For an examination of the evolution and a comparison of the Thessaloniki and final documents see Sven Biscop, *The European Security Strategy – Implementing a Distinctive Approach to Security*, Paper No 82 Royal Defence College, Brussels, March 2004.

² Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, accessed at <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf> on 20 May 2004; Council of the European Union, *Fight Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction – EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Brussels, 10 December 2003 accessed at http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/78340.pdf on 20 May 2004.

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operation, both strategies strongly emphasise multilateral co-operation with and within both international organisations, especially the UN, the WTO or the IAEA, in conjunction with NATO and individual allies, especially the US, but also Russia. Significantly, the transatlantic relationship is identified as a core element of the international system, which is not only in the EU's "bilateral interest but strengthens the international community as a whole".³ Three, the security strategy defines three concentric rings of concern: the EU area, its immediate neighbourhood and the wider world.

It identifies as main challenges for the future: development and security as its precondition, global environmental and health risks, competition for natural resources, especially water, and Europe's dependence on energy imports, which it expects to rise from 50% today to 70% of total energy consumption in 2030, from mainly the Gulf, Russia and North Africa. Explicitly defined key threats are terrorism (for which Europe is a target and a base), the proliferation WMD (by both state and non-state actors) with the possibility of an arms race in the Middle East, regional conflicts that may escalate or lead to state failure, state failure (potentially associated with terrorism and organised crime) and organised crime (especially cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, weapons and illegal migrants) that may have links with terrorism. The threat assessment concludes: "Taking these different elements together – terrorism committed to maximum violence, the availability of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, the weakening of the state system and the privatisation of force – we could be confronted with a very radical threat indeed."⁴

The policy implications envisaged are broadly to be more active (not only in pursuing the EU's strategic objectives, but also in conflict prevention); more capable (in conducting military operations and eventually a wider spectrum of missions, such as joint disarmament operations or security sector reform, intelligence sharing and working with NATO); and more coherent (in bringing together EU assistance and development programmes or military and civilian assets of member states, co-ordinate external policies with Justices and Home Affairs). The strategy paper suggests that the EU should play a

³ *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, p. 9.

⁴ *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, p. 5.

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more active role in the Southern Caucasus, which will “in due course also be a neighbouring region”, an implicit acknowledgement that Turkey will become an EU member. It projects developing further existing ties with the Middle East, Africa and Asia and strategic partnerships with Japan, China, Canada and India. The relationship with Russia is seen as a major factor in the EU’s security and prosperity, but the transatlantic relationship is described as “irreplaceable”. The EU should aim to have an “effective and balanced partnership with the US”, because if they are acting together they “can be a formidable force for good in the world”, which is “an additional reason for the EU to build up further its capabilities and increase coherence”.⁵

Filling the Gap between Aspirations and Military Capabilities

The strategy thus clearly reflects both the EU’s own experience in building security and stability from within the Union and the impact of its or its member states’ experience in conflicts after the Cold War. There is a strong commitment to building the capacity for military action, a process that had started before the Anglo-French Agreement at St Malo, but since then has had a great deal more impetus. There is wide spread realisation that the EU can only become effective in preventing, containing or helping to resolve regional conflicts, if it is able to enforce stability or the norms of good governance to which its is deeply committed. Under the leadership of the UK, which many officials in Brussels see as indispensable, in conjunction with France and to a smaller degree Italy and Germany, the EU and NATO have begun to drive forward military reform in Europe. The Helsinki Headline Goals (1999), which are to enable the EU to deploy an autonomous force of 50,000 to 60,000 with their equipment and logistics to a crisis and sustain it for up to one year, were declared operational at Thessaloniki in 2003, although they may have been only be two thirds ready.

In May 2004 the Council of Europe approved ‘Headline Goal 2010’ (6309/6/04), which incorporates the capabilities of the new member states. It will be submitted to the Council for official adoption in June 2004. It sets the parameters for the development of the EU’s military forces by 2010 and defines more clearly the level of rapid reaction to be achieved. The EU aims to be able to decide on the launch of an operation within five days

⁵ *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, p. 13.

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of the Crisis Management Concept having been approved by the Council and for the forces to start implementing their mission within ten days after the decision to launch. The Council emphasised that the new Headline Goal force is in keeping with the Security Strategy and draws on lessons learnt from EU-led operations. It announced that member states committed themselves to “be able by 2010 to respond to a crisis with rapid and decisive action applying a fully coherent approach to the full spectrum of crisis management operations” covered by the EU Treaty; including: “humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking” and possibly “joint disarmament operations, the support for third countries in combating terrorism and security sector reform.”⁶ The commitment is for the EU to “share the responsibility for global security”.⁷ There is an expectation that an initial Battle or Tactical Group capability for rapid response is available by early 2005 and full capability by 2007.

Headline Forces, NATO Response Force (NRF) and Procurement Planning

On paper the forces required for the Headline Goals and the NATO Response Force (NRF) are highly compatible, because both are expected to engage in the same types of operations, except that NATO forces are to be available for collective defence which is not part of the EU’s remit, and the EU forces are intended to be bigger than NRF. It will be absolutely necessary to further expand co-ordination with NATO as some of the national units will be double hated and, in view of available resources, this situation will persist for the foreseeable future. However, it has been stressed that close co-ordination with NATO is essential, lest the two organisations are prepared to run the risk of overstretch.⁸ It is widely recognised that the publics of EU member states are unlikely to approve of significantly higher defence budgets. Given this and the fact that

⁶ Excerpt from Press Release, 2582nd Council meeting – External Relations, Brussels 17 May 2004 (9210/04 (Presse 149) - Excerpt.

⁷ L. Kirk, *EU Defence Ministers Admit Global Responsibility*, Forum Europe New Detail, 18 May 2004 accessed at http://www.newdefenceagenda.org/news_detail.asp?ID=181&block=true on 20 May 2004.

⁸ Assembly of the Western European Union, *A European Strategic Concept – Defence Aspects*, Report submitted on behalf of the Defence Committee by Mr Gubert, Rapporteur, 1 December 2003, A/1841, p. 21.

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there are not only large numbers of obsolete forces, but also significant duplication in major equipment items, aims such as avoiding duplication, spending defence budgets more efficiently through obtaining economies of scale and interoperability are also recognised as long term goals. In the meantime a suggested aim is to identify areas of R&D of common interest, such as new technologies, space and advanced command, control, communications, intelligence and information systems that are compatible with US equipment, which are essential. Although essential, only few programmes exist in these areas.⁹

The establishment of the European Armaments, Research and Military Capabilities Agency, whose head Nick Whitney (UK) was appointed earlier this year, and the commitment of the EU members to “harmonise their future requirements” by 2010,¹⁰ are significant steps in the right direction. One could of course argue that the main topics of the debate are not new, in fact they were on the transatlantic burden-sharing agenda throughout most of the Cold War and yielded very little result. However, there are various reason for some degree of optimism.

One, the defence industrial landscape in Europe has changed over the past decade with a number of trans-national mergers, although there is on the one hand still less than desirable efficiency and on the other hand the risk of losing the advantage of competition to monopolisation. Two, the pressure on European defence budgets is increasing. In the UK, for example, concern has arisen over the choices policy makers will have to face if they continue on the path they have chosen without contemplating budget rises. There are several highly capital intensive items in the pipeline and the 2003 Defence White Paper projected even further integration with the military capability of the US. Timothy Garden has argued in various contexts that, although it was desirable for the UK to have a high-end capability, should the defence budget not increase the UK might have to make a choice between contributing to US operations, not necessarily in a significant manner, or to EU crisis prevention or management capabilities.¹¹ This suggests that the problem is much more fundamental than the allocation of material resources. Should the choice be

⁹ Assembly of the Western European Union, *A European Strategic Concept*, p. 22.

¹⁰ L. Kirk, *EU Defence Ministers Admit Global Responsibility*

¹¹ Air Marshal Sir Timothy Garden and General Sir David Ramsbotham, “About Face – The British Armed Forces Which Way to Turn?”, *RUSI Journal* May 2004 and accessed on 21 May 2004 at <http://www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/2004/040427rusi.html>

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between being able to co-operate with the two main allies – the US and European partners - the question of how to spend defence funds becomes even more profoundly political. This is not a question the UK has not faced before, but it has become much more difficult to answer. Three, there are now wider external pressures to adapt to the new strategic environment, which arise no longer only from the US, but also from requests for a European crisis intervention capability, as was most recently put forward by the President of Azerbaijan.¹² The Security Strategy projected a greater engagement in the Caucasus and the EU may now find itself swiftly called upon to come through with its commitments. Unless the Union and its members wish to risk their credibility, they need to continue the very dynamic pace of translating words into actions.

Putting Words into Action – New Operational Experience for the EU

The EU and member states – under NATO and with third countries – have of course long been involved in the Balkans, providing security, reconstruction assistance and training, for example new security forces, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia-Montenegro, Kosovo as well as FYROM. It has, however, also begun to take more self-sustained action. With Operation *Proxima* it took on policing missions in FYROM. Operation *Artemis* in Democratic Republic of Congo, which the EU implemented after France had prepared the mission in 2003, did demonstrate – within the limits of the operation being of relatively small scale, with a narrow mandate and of predetermined short duration – that the EU could set up the relevant organisational structures and conduct the operation successfully. The EU maintained a presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo in support of the stabilisation and reconstruction process. In her assessment of Operation *Artemis*, Fernanda Feria concluded that operational weaknesses and institutional constraints were overcome by political will and it was the latter “that really mattered”.¹³

¹² A. Beatty, *EU asked to intervene in crisis in Caucasus*, Forum Europe- News Detail, 18 May 2004, accessed at http://www.newdefenceagenda.org/news_detail.asp?ID=180&block=true on 22 May 2004.

¹³ Fernanda Feria, *Crisis Management in Sub-Saharan Africa – The Role of the European Union* (Paris: EU-ISS, Occasional Paper No 51, April 2004), p. 47 - The assessment of Operation Artemis is based on this source.

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The EU drew several positive lessons from the operation, which was the first to be conducted by EU in conjunction with other forces, but without NATO assets. The arrangement of France acting as the so-called framework nation was subsequently regarded as a success. Some have even suggested that this – at least for operations of similar scale – would render or perhaps postpone the need for EU Operational Headquarters, which had caused some considerable tensions both among EU member states, with NATO and the US.¹⁴ – However, there are doubts that all EU members would be capable of acting as the framework nation. - Even the humanitarian aid community, which has often had difficulties working with armed forces providing security during interventions in intra-state conflicts, considered the management of civil-military relations to have been one of the particularly successful aspects of the operation. Nevertheless, the EU was also reminded of the already well-known shortcomings in military capabilities, such as strategic transport, secure and long-distance communication, information technology, intelligence sharing and interoperability of European forces.¹⁵

By the end of 2004 the EU is expected to take over the duties of SFOR, pending an official decision by the EU at the European Council in Brussels and NATO at the Istanbul Summit, both in June 2004. Although the details of the operational arrangements are still being determined, the expectation is that the EU and NATO will co-ordinate their activities, including an exchange of expertise NATO personnel acquired with their presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a relatively strong continued presence of US personnel.¹⁶ Originally proposed by the UK and France, this will be the largest and most demanding operation the EU is undertaking.¹⁷ Where *Artemis* included 400 troops, EUFOR as it may be called, is expected to command about the same number as SFOR (7,000). It will be conducted under the Berlin Plus arrangements, that is, with NATO assistance.

¹⁴ Feria, pp. 47 ff.

¹⁵ Feria, p. 44

¹⁶ Assembly of the Western European Union, The European Union's Stabilisation Missions in South-East Europe, Report submitted on behalf of the Political Committee by Mr Wilkonson, Rapporteur (UK, Federated Group), Document C/1859, 10 May 2004, pp. 14-16.

¹⁷ Assembly of the Western European Union, *The EU headline goal and the NATO Response Force (NRF) – Reply to the annual report of the Council*, Report submitted on behalf of the Defence Committee by Mr Rivolta, Rapporteur, 3 June 2003, A/1825, p. 8.

Aspects of Member State Input into EU-Level Policy

There is little doubt that the UK has played a major role in driving developments forward. Amongst virtually all NATO members, the UK has the most extensive experience in the type of counter-insurgency, peace-keeping and enforcement operations that became necessary during the 1990s, combined with advanced warfighting skills and a much less complicated and fraught attitude towards the use of force than, say, Germany. As a result of the experience in the Balkans under UN mandate, the UK was the first European country to develop a doctrine for peace-keeping and peace support operations. France, too, was in many ways better prepared than other European NATO and EU members for post Cold War operations. It is therefore not surprising that UK and France were the main drivers of progress in defence matters at EU level. Germany took first tentative steps towards becoming a player in the global and regional security business in Somalia, also under the auspices of the UN. It has since become much more deeply involved than could have been expected at the end of the Cold War and plans to contribute 1,500 soldiers to the European successor to SFOR.

However, Germany has also made significant progress in developing new organisational and conceptual tools for the civil and military elements of peace-keeping and long-term conflict resolution, although its aspirations are even higher and directed at developing national expertise in conflict prevention. This includes enhancing co-ordination between ministries and other organisations involved in the provision of the different dimensions of security and the establishment of a Centre for International Peace Operations (Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze) in Berlin, which trains personnel in crisis prevention, management and negotiation techniques.

Although military reforms are only gradually picking up, are constrained by budgetary considerations and the armed forces are not substantially tied into the comprehensive 'conflict management' framework, there is at last a commitment to implement aspects of the reform proposals of the 1990s. The focus of current and planned reforms is on personnel structures. On the one hand this is sensible because, although the German armed forces are numerous, the proportion of personnel that is adequately prepared for the tasks envisaged by the government is relatively small. – Defence Secretary Struck is, however, still committed to conscription. Should German armed

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forces be sent to global conflict regions more frequently, it is likely only a matter of time until the Bundeswehr becomes a professional army, not least because there are some arguments that this would be more cost effective.¹⁸ The German approach to security policy is highly compatible with the EU's strategy paper, because it emphasises crisis prevention and management, but does not preclude military intervention.¹⁹ An approach to dealing with crises that is designed for the long-term, follows the same philosophy as the EU's strategy paper – and despite many changes in the past decade, apart from NATO the EU is still central to Germany's foreign and security policy.

Of Complex Tasks and Long Hauls

The EU defined security in terms of human security, not least due to its and its member states' experience since the 1990s. Although the ability to use high-level force was in some cases essential – and the EU becoming painfully aware of the deficiencies in its own forces was a major trigger for subsequent action – the restoration of post-conflict societies is significantly more complex and requires a much broader mix of tools and expertise. EU member states, which were or are part of NATO missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and FYROM, and gradually the EU as a whole have been preoccupied with the tasks and setbacks of reconstructing Balkan societies for years and are likely to continue to do so. It is quite safe to project that the EU - in co-operation with NATO or independently – or its members will be involved in enhancing security at its periphery, especially the Balkans, for at least the next decade.

A case in point is Kosovo, where EU members are of course present under the UN and NATO umbrella. Failure in Kosovo could be disastrous for the entire region. Kosovo Albanians have persecuted Kosovar Serbs since 1999 and in March 2004 the situation escalated, resulting in riots against Kosovo Serbs and UN personnel, nineteen deaths, 900 injured and Serb, Askali and Roma homes as well as Serb churches and monasteries

¹⁸ Hans-Dieter Lemke, *Welche Bundeswehr fuer den neuen Auftrag? – Die Freiwilligenarmee ist die bessere Loesung* (Which Bundeswehr for the New Mission – A Volunteer Army is the better Solution), SWP Study --S 26, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, June 2003.

¹⁹ For more details see for example Gunilla Fincke and Arzu Hatakoy, "Krisenprävention als neues Leitbild deutscher Aussenpolitik: Friedenspolitik mit zivilen und militärischen Mitteln?" (Crisis Prevention as the New Rationale for German Foreign Policy: Peace Policy by Civilian and Military Means?), in Sebastian Hanisch et al., *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder* (German Security Policy – Taking Stock of the Schröder Government) (Nomos, 2004), pp. 59-86.

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destroyed and 4,500 people displaced.²⁰ The displaced people were mainly Kosovo Serbs living in enclaves in the South, which were effectively ethnically cleansed during the riots, and resulted in the displaced Serbs moving into the Serb-dominated northern part of Mitrovica. At the time all affected or interested neighbours were restrained, but UNMIK and KFOR are considered to have been exposed as weak and, as the International Crisis Group warns, “if the underlying causes of the violence are not dealt with immediately and directly – through political, developmental and security measures alike – Kosovo risks becoming Europe’s West Bank”.²¹

Cross-border ethnic ties, the yet unresolved status of Kosovo, the continued dependence (for example for health and education) of Kosovo Serbs on Belgrade, where political developments have also given cause for concern more recently, could draw Serbia-Montenegro, FYROM and Albania into a conflict. The result may be either a number of failed states in the Balkans from which any terrorist organisation can pick in order to establish a base. Or, a prospect not even marginally more appealing, the Balkans revert to multiple internal and trans-border wars. The problem that emerges is that, although Kosovo has received very significant amounts of development aid from the EU as well as individual member states, this has not yet transformed a derelict economic infrastructure into a core of assets for viable economic development. It has been suggested that the large amounts of aid that have flown into the province are part of the problem.²² The economy has been able to grow, but on the back of ‘assets’ that are in the process of being reduced. These are the international presence as well as aid from the Balkan Stabilisation Pact. Foreign investment on the other hand has not yet been attracted, because the security situation, the administrative infrastructure and the legal status of property are not yet settled. Given that the Kosovo Albanians, including the elite, appear to be of the opinion that the situation will be remedied as soon as independence is achieved, and set their political priorities (and the willingness to cooperate with Belgrade) accordingly, and Serbia-Montenegro is also showing reluctance to

²⁰ International Crisis Group, *Collapse in Kosovo* (Report No 155, Pristina, Belgrade, Brussels, 22 April 2004), p. i.

²¹ *Collapse in Kosov*, p. i.

²² Marie-Janine Calic, *Kosovo 2004 – Optionen deutscher und europäischer Politik* (Options for Germana and European Policy), SWP-Studie S-1 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, January 2004).

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reform its political structures and attitudes, a period of very intense diplomacy lies ahead for UNMIK, KFOR and the EU.

Ultimately, it is projected that the countries of the Balkans will join the EU, but there is no illusion that this might happen soon. Before this is feasible, there is a variety to security issues to be addressed. These are all related to central elements of the Security Strategy. The establishment of functioning police forces as well as the stimulation of political will of local authorities and governments to enforce laws and combat organised crime is seen as essential for the security and prosperity of the Balkan societies and EU internal security. All Balkan economies need not only be reconstructed, but also undergo the transition process from planned to free market economies. Political structures and processes have to be established in support of not only democratic governance, but also – in view of most Balkan countries' own aspirations – provide for the implementation of Human Rights and, more immediately important, the return or, where unavoidable, re-settlement of refugees or displaced people.

Kosovo and Iraq – Difference Scales, Comparable Challenge?

Are any of these experiences then of relevance to transatlantic relations? The problems in the Balkans pale into insignificance compared to the situation in Iraq. However, some of the challenges experienced during and after NATO's intervention in 1999 suggest lessons for the current situation in Iraq. The military operations in Kosovo did not achieve the political objective as fast as intended, a problem often attributed to the fact that NATO expected Belgrade to comply much sooner in response to a strategy of gradual escalation and therefore did not apply massive pressure from the air immediately. In the case of Iraq, the latter approach was chosen. In both cases major combat operations were concluded relatively quickly, in 78 and 43 days respectively, but in both cases the phase following the period of major combat is proving to be significantly more difficult than anticipated prior to the intervention. A Stabilisation Plan was in place for Kosovo even before the fighting ended, but its implementation needs to be adapted to the evolving situation. It is widely believed in Europe that the absence of such a plan for Iraq before the war has contributed significantly to the subsequent difficulties. Adapting an existing plan is generally easier than developing one in the midst of crisis. Yet, in both

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cases major problems arose and still arise not only from the physical challenges of securing the environment, re-building the infrastructure and re-establishing political and economic processes, but also from problems of perception and expectations.

In both cases the problems of perceptions were generated already during the combat phase, but they have the nasty habit of being reinforced negatively over time regardless of whether the perception matches reality or not and they may be crucial for the success or failure of the post-combat and eventual restoration phase. The importance of images and perceptions – and the ability to project them – as well as the great importance of managing civil-military co-operation were two major lessons of the Kosovo operation, debated during a conference at Sandhurst which assessed the lessons of the wars in the Balkans.²³ There was a strong notion that, whilst images and media coverage may not contribute to winning a war, they can contribute to losing it. At the same time, British and NATO representatives emphasised that it was of great importance to tell the truth, as it will come out anyway. Iraq has a much higher profile in the international media and the potential ramifications of the situation much wider scope. It is thus possible that enemy perceptions in the Arab world will not only have operational, but strategic consequences.

One link between these two cases and the wider thinking about security in the medium and longer term future is that in both cases the expectation is that either the peace support operations will be required for at least a decade, perhaps a generation, though not necessarily conducted by the forces currently deployed. A further link is that a failure of either operation may spell long-term insecurity in the respective region for two reasons. One, in both regions the potential for a currently contained conflict to spill over into neighbouring countries is high. Two, in both conflicts the potential of non-state actors, organised criminals or terrorists, finding or already establishing a base for their operations is high. Despite the continued reluctance of some European allies to send troops to Iraq, there is a strong case for building bridges on both sides and drawing on the lessons learnt and now being implemented by the Europeans in complex conflict environments. New initiatives need to be imaginative and should include partners in the

²³ Stephen Badsey, Paul Latawski (eds.), *Britain, NATO and the Lessons of the Balkan Conflicts, 1991-1999* (London, New York: Frank Cass, 2004).

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region, where the Europeans might be able to use their diplomatic leverage. They may have to be prepared long before an adequate mode of implementation is likely to be found, but the risks to global, US and European security of a failure to resolve the crisis in Iraq are too grave to not make a renewed attempt. This would also signal to the Europeans that they are listened to as partners and not only heard – which was one of the major causes of friction in recent transatlantic relations.

Outlook and Conclusions

By way of an outlook, the Europeans are likely to be preoccupied in the next one or two decades with the following concerns:

Stability in the wider region, including the Middle East, is likely to rise on the security agenda for various reasons. The terrorist threat and Iraq war have again reminded the EU of the need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although Russia is a major energy supplier for the EU, especially gas, the member states are dependent on oil from the Middle East. In the future Caspian Sea countries are likely to be major suppliers, which is one reason for the EU's projection of greater involvement in the Caucasus. Furthermore, Turkish EU membership, although still contested, has for some time now been debated as increasingly likely. In that case, the EU will share a border with countries that are currently not particularly stable or potentially unfriendly. The EU's efforts at negotiating a trade agreement with Syria that includes a commitment to non-proliferation of WMD, as well as the intended 'expansion' of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue to the wider Arab world need to be seen in this context. The threat of terrorism to energy supply lines and transport links through the Mediterranean will require more than dialogue with transit states. Although this is not explicitly mentioned in the Security Strategy, it is hardly conceivable that these questions only concern NATO, but not the EU.²⁴

The EU will continue to be concerned about the proliferation of WMD, but it is not yet clear how it is going to expand its efforts beyond the active engagement with international organisations, such as the IAEA, and diplomatic initiatives with countries

²⁴ For a NATO perspective see for example Martin Edmonds and Oldrich Cerny (eds.), *Future NATO Security – Addressing the Challenges of Evolving Security and Information Sharing Systems and Architectures* (NATO Science Series, Amsterdam: IOS, 2004).

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such as Iran. It will continue its co-operation with Russia and other FSU states on securing nuclear facilities and materials. Its scope is, however, somewhat limited by internal and external factors. Throughout the 1990s Russia has often been reluctant to allow the EU or non-nuclear member states access to potentially sensitive sites. The current constructive relationship cannot be taken for granted. In the contemporary context the potentially more important factors are some, although not debilitating, internal restrictions. For example, some member states, which decided to freeze the development of nuclear energy at home, are reluctant to support any activities that might be seen to facilitate the continued existence of the post-Soviet nuclear industry. Even if a project is intended to facilitate disarmament, such as the MOX option for the disposal of excess plutonium, there is resistance to supporting such efforts, because they ultimately contribute to the new development of nuclear infrastructure.

There is little doubt that the Europeans are going to be preoccupied with the security of post-conflict societies, if this is not too optimistic a term, in their immediate vicinity for the foreseeable future. Added to the pre-existing incentives for deep engagement and further development of capabilities for crisis prevention, conflict management and resolution capabilities as well as support for global development is now the linkage between terrorism and failed states. The purpose here is to deny terrorist organisations access to a territorial base and recruitment pool. Related to concern that the conflicts in the Balkans may re-emerge is the persistent problem of organised crime. This problem of course goes beyond the Balkans and has been a major preoccupation during the accession negotiations with the Central European states. The EU's borders have moved closer to one of the major geographical sources of organised criminality. Apart from enhancing internal security co-operation and law enforcement tools, especially since 9-11, it will also be necessary to support the new members in the area of border security.

A potentially quite difficult challenge will be the management of the transformation to a much larger EU. The new members seek to maintain and deepen their ties with both the EU and the US, but if forced to choose have at least in the past opted for an Atlanticist approach to foreign and security policy. This inclination is linked to high expectations in NATO as the principal guarantor of their security – including against Russia – and ultimately the US as the guarantor of European security. The objective of

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maintaining close transatlantic relations is widely shared among NATO and EU members, but the “old” EU members, especially if they are also members of NATO, have developed a tradition of negotiating the transatlantic relationship. The question for the future is whether the new EU members will feel sufficiently assertive in Brussels as well as confident in their relationship with the US to engage actively in the EU’s discourse on security policy and the negotiations on the transatlantic relationship, which may lead transform both.

In conclusion, for transatlantic relations the row over the Iraq may in some ways have been healthy. It forced the EU to reflect on its capabilities, assets and expertise. It triggered new determination to seek complementary approaches to highly complex problems of global security and at the same time reminded the member states, whether they were with or against the decision, that they needed to enhance their credibility if they sought to influence events. The Security Strategy was developed in response to this row and it is at the very least highly likely that the EU will now take more determined steps to implement it, because the nature and complexity of future security challenges cannot be met with national expertise and resources alone. The US and EU have complementary assets and expertise. They could do worse than learn from each other and strengthen each others’ weaknesses.